

Maryland Plan to Eliminate Health Disparities

“HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION”

Committee Charge

December 2004

Preface: The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has been given the responsibility, by legislation, to undertake tasks that will reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities in the state. To this end, the Department is developing a statewide plan with broad input and partners.

Bias, stereotyping and unfamiliarity with different types of people, on the part of health care providers may contribute to racial and ethnic disparities. Increased cultural competency on the part of health practitioners can lead to greater patient participation and satisfaction and more adherence to medical advice and follow-up.

Charge: The “*Health Professional Education*” committee is charged with studying health professional education, continuing education, and patterns of patient interaction to recommend changes that will increase cultural competency and improve communication by Maryland’s health professional workforce.

The Committee is asked to submit a report of recommendations to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene by June 30, 2005

Methods: The Committee may use a variety of planning tools:

- A. Conduct wide research to discover successful practices,
- B. Invite expert speakers from health professional schools, private practitioners, hospitals and other institutions who interact with patients,
- C. Invite expert speakers from patient populations who may speak from the point of view of the recipient of services,
- D. Seek “Best Practices” that have been used in other settings to increase effective communications between patients and health care providers,
- E. Identify new approaches that work.

“It is not only what we do that we are held responsible, but also for what we do not do”